

WhatTheyThink’s Keys to Success as an Industry Disrupter

Back in 2000, the “printing industry news” space was dominated by traditional print publications operating on 30-day calendars. No one thought that we would all be interested in getting industry information every day. Then WhatTheyThink came along and proved conventional wisdom wrong!

“WhatTheyThink started as a simple digital portal for printing industry news,” shares Eric Vessels, President, “and in the early days some in the print industry took offense to the fact that we did not have a print publication. But that was not our business model. After all, the ‘up-to-the-minute news’ that we discovered people really do want is not possible with a print publication’s production schedule.”

Before long, in addition to their web portal, WhatTheyThink became known for their Daily Update email newsletter. “Our claim to fame,” Eric asserts, “is that we aggregate and curate all the industry news so that it’s a relevant feed delivered in a relevant way that makes



sense. We let people choose whether to get that aggregated and curated news via the email newsletter or on our <https://whattheythink.com> website.”

Operating on a “freemium” model

Since its inception, WhatTheyThink has operated on a “freemium” model. While much of their content—including the daily newsletter—is available for free, there is also premium content that is only available to paid members.

“Over the years,” Eric relates, “we’ve developed close relationships with industry thought leaders. The paid content side of our business model gives us the funds to pay some of these top thinkers to write commentary and analysis about topics in the industry that matter.”

Applying the MVP concept to the content world

One of WhatTheyThink’s core philosophies is that they manage the business on an MVP (Minimum Viable

Product) model. While the MVP concept is most commonly applied to software development, Eric explains that for WhatTheyThink this means that they “look to fail fast, fail small and fail often. We don’t overly invest in any ideas or new things that we’re doing. Instead we try out a minimally viable version of the idea and observe. Then we quickly jettison the failures and invest more heavily in the winners.”

For example, in around 2008, when YouTube was taking off, WhatTheyThink thought that their audience might appreciate video-based content. Although a lot of people thought they were wrong, they ignored the naysayers and found a low-cost way to dip their toes in the video content creation waters.

“We showed up at an industry event,” Eric says, “with a consumer-level video camera and wired mics, and started to record video. It was immediately popular! Since then we’ve made over 4,000 videos, averaging 1.3 a day since

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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Tenant Representation in Commercial Property Leases



There’s a “dirty little secret” in the commercial real estate world that many tenants are not aware of. When it comes to commercial real estate leases, nearly all brokerage firms happily represent both sides of the deal. Which means there’s a good chance that the broker who promised to get you a “great deal” on commercial space or a lease renewal promised the property owner that they’d be negotiating a “great deal” on their behalf as well.

So whose side are these “dual representation” brokers really on? The tenant with whom they may do one deal every few years... or the property owner that they represent in countless negotiations every quarter? And what about confidentiality? When one broker is privy to both sides’ confidential

information, how does that play out?

Don’t fall into the dual representation trap

If you lease your business’ space, your best option is to work with a Tenant Representative — someone with a fiduciary duty to represent *your* best interests.

“What many business owners don’t realize,” says Sean Biernacki, an experienced Tenant Representative from Centric Partners who specializes in Orange County, CA commercial lease transactions, “is that there’s no cost to engage the services of a company like ours. There’s a commission built into every commercial lease that’s paid by the property owner. When the tenant has their own representation,

this commission is split between the landlord’s broker and the tenant’s advocate. When the landlord’s broker represents both parties, they simply pocket both halves of the commission.”

Although engaging a Tenant Representative is free, not engaging one can be costly.

There’s a lot at stake in a lease negotiation

As Sean points out, “Whether you are moving to a new space or negotiating a lease renewal, without your own representation you are likely to leave money on the table. There are numerous negotiable aspects of the contract that you can bet were written in the landlord’s favor. A Tenant Representative will work to tip the scale in your favor instead.”

In addition to basics such as rental rates and type of lease (Triple Net, Industrial Gross, etc.), you should also be negotiating everything else, from the tenant improvement allowance and signage rights to early exit options, a self-help clause and more.

Tenant representation is not just about lease negotiations

That said, a full service Tenant Representative such as Sean can help you with many other aspects of the process as well. You can tap their expertise for assistance with site selection, strategic planning, feasibility studies,

demographic studies, property profiles, lease review/analysis, audits of building operating expenses and much more.

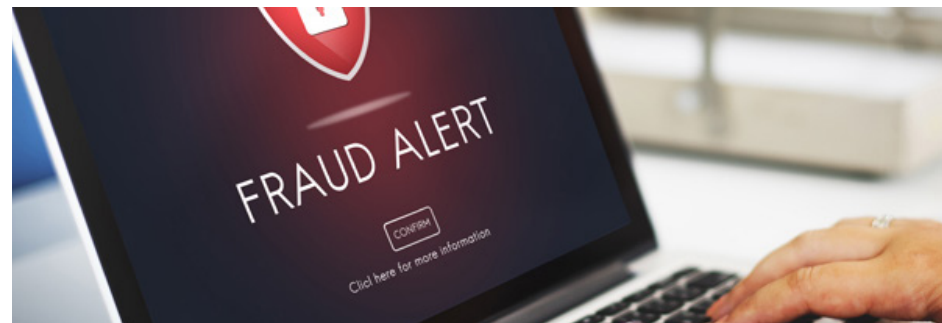
The reality is, when you need to lease commercial space for your organization, there’s only one way to ensure that you receive conflict-free representation: Engage the services of an experienced commercial real estate who only represents tenants. Because when you’re sitting down at the negotiating table, you want an unbiased advocate at your side.

The bottom line

“When you’re seeking to lease or renew your lease for real estate space,” Sean observes, “your goals for the negotiation process are quite different than those of the property owner. As a tenant you want to get the most possible concessions and benefits at the lowest possible costs. The property owner wants the opposite of this. A broker who is representing both sides of the deal will naturally favor the property owner because of the regular, repeat business that the property owner provides. But a broker who only represents your side of the deal – a Tenant Representative – will work hard to get the best possible deal for *you*.”

RISK MANAGEMENT

4 Easy Ways to Prevent a Data Breach



You probably roll your eyes every time you get an email from a Nigerian prince, asking you to transfer \$25,000 to their bank account. Isn’t it also amazing (and highly coincidental) how you win the lottery from a foreign country on a weekly basis?

While the above scenarios may be obvious as a scam to some, **around 90% of all data breaches come from phishing.**

Phishing is when an attacker sends out a message or email asking the recipient to provide some type of secure information. It can often be used to deploy software that leads to an attack to hold the company hostage for ransom.

CISCO reports at least one person clicks on a phishing link in 86% of organizations.

So really, a phishing attempt might not be as obvious as you think. And

even if you catch it, what about ALL the employees at your company? Would they be able to decipher the difference between a phishing email and a normal email? All it takes is one click on one email to unleash a data attack on your business, which, in some cases, may cause you to have to close your doors.

These are the top four signs you (and your employees) should look for in any email that you don’t recognize:

- Unusual requests.** Maybe you’re being asked to send a gift card or to text them with information. Pay particular attention to those that seem to originate from your organization. Is it a request from your manager or coworker and with language they wouldn’t normally use?
- Grammatical or spelling errors.** Is punctuation missing? Do you see terms made plural when they

- should be singular or vice versa?
- The domain name and email address don’t match each other.** You’ll also want to pay attention when it does seem like it comes from within your organization. Always check the original email address to make sure it’s not “spoofed.”
- Urgency.** You’ll notice this more in the subject line, with words like “urgent,” “immediate action,” “attention” or “important.” These are often tied to content like a “problem with your order” and come from a retailer or online pay portal. Did you order something within the last 10 minutes? If not, be very wary. Check the domain, check your bank or credit card first. Be aware of these terms when you are sending out emails also.

If your current IT company falls short on continually educating and training your employees, doesn’t quickly follow up on your requests and takes forever to call you back, we can help. Contact Shield IT Networks at 800-711-5522 to get a third-party validation of your current network to make sure you’re properly protected.

Source: Shield IT Networks, www.shielditnetworks.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Commercial Print Summit

On December 7 and 8 in Denver, Colorado, All Copy Products will present Commercial Print Summit 2022, the most exciting commercial printing event in the Rocky Mountain Front Range.

Featuring a unique mix of equipment, technology, vendors and special guests, Commercial Print Summit will have a primary focus on adding efficiency and profitability through automation. Highlights include an overview of the newest equipment from Canon and Konica Minolta, expert presentations of best practices and techniques, live project demos, and a variety of vendor-hosted breakout sessions.

PIASC will be sponsoring a holiday party from 5:00 to 7:00 pm on both days of the event. Raffles will be held for some amazing holiday gifts, so don’t miss your chance to win a 75” TV, two pairs of Colorado Avalanche hockey tickets or one of the many other raffle prizes.

Register for the Summit at <https://bit.ly/22Com-Print-Summit>. Both member and non-member attendees are invited!

If you have any questions, please contact Cathy Skoglund at cathy@piasc.org.

FEATURE

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2008. This is a great example of the MVP approach.”

Of course, not all of WhatTheyThink’s ideas have been successful. “There have been multiple times where we’ve tried something and it didn’t work out,” Eric admits. “But we tend to forget those! The ‘fail fast, fail small and fail often’ philosophy has allowed us to try a lot of new things. We don’t fear failure because we’ll fail small and fast as we find out what works and what doesn’t. We don’t build big five-year strategic plans. We plan a year in advance from the editorial and strategy standpoint, but build in a way that we can also be entrepreneurial and reactive in everything we do.”

Working hard, playing hard

As Eric puts it, the WhatTheyThink team works hard and plays hard. They take their work seriously but don’t take themselves too seriously. They joke, prank and have a lot of fun.

Today, as part of all that hard work, they are even putting out a print publication! In 2018 they acquired Printing News, which they have since re-branded as WhatTheyThink. Going forward, the WhatTheyThink magazine will be published six times a year, with each edition focused on a different issue of interest to the industry.

Conclusion

WhatTheyThink’s goal has always been to inform, educate and inspire the industry. Eric is understandably proud of how WhatTheyThink has accomplished this. Over 20 years ago they disrupted the industry with what at the time was seen as a wild and crazy business model. Today WhatTheyThink is the go-to source of trusted information for the global printing industry. We can all learn from their “fail fast, fail small and fail often” approach.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Pre-Order Your New 2023 Labor Law Posters



Many regulations will be updated or introduced for California in 2023. Your 2022 posters will be considered outdated and you will not be in compliance.

Important things to know:

- The updated California State & Federal 2023 posters include important revisions to the California Minimum Wage Notice and the Discrimination Notice.
- Also available are posters on sexual harassment prevention, code of safe practices, first aid/choking/CPR, California fair housing, California human trafficking, HIPAA, Workers Compensation fraud, and more.

Posters are available in both English and Spanish. PIASC is able to save our members money by offering the California State and Federal posters for just \$20.50 each (versus the CalChamber cost of \$42.99). These prices are for PIASC members only.

Avoid fines and penalties by pre-ordering your posters! Download the order form at <https://bit.ly/2023-labor-law-poster> or contact Emily Holguin, 323.728.9500, Ext. 200 or emily@piasc.org.

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CLASSIFIEDS

SELLING: Commercial print shop in Southern California with 5-color offset press, digital, small offset and bindery equipment. Over \$1M in annual sales. Long-time owners are willing to help with the transition. Email Kristy Villanueva at kristy@piasc.org for more information.

SELLING: Antique shed filled with printing items, including a paper cutter dating back to the 1880s, a handled letterpress from 1899, antique perforator, antique saw, furniture cabinet, wood type, type case full of drawers, etc. Also selling some more modern items including an older Miehle Vertical folder and a pin ruling machine. Items are located in Kennewick, Washington. If you are interested please contact Skip Novakovich at skip@novakovichllc.com.

PLANT LIQUIDATION: Will Consider all offers. All equipment is currently running. 3-Clamshell Die Cutters. 2-28” X 40” 1- 20” X 27” Presstek Dimension 425 Turnkey CTP. Contact Keith at 818.257.9330 or L84teex@earthlink.net.

OFFICES FOR RENT: Ideal for Print Brokers, small Ad Agency, or Creative/ Graphic Designers. Month-to-month rental of various size office spaces, in prime industrial Culver City / Hayden Tract. Great location inside established offset printing company. Rent negotiable depending on office size needed. Parking onsite available. Call 310.839.3828 or email production@colourprintusa.com.

Want to place a classified ad? Contact Kristy Villanueva at 323.728.9500, Ext. 215, Kristy@piasc.org.

UPDATED

Thanksgiving

Holiday

Schedule

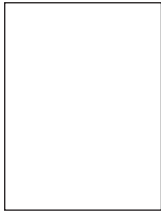
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We will be closed

November

23rd - 25th

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PIASC
5800 S. Eastern Ave., # 400
Los Angeles, CA 90040

For full list of events, please visit www.piasc.org/events

DEC

13

Planning Your 2023 Safety Program

Tuesday, December 13

Online Webinar

<https://contactc/3eeGfc>

DEC

7-8

Commercial Print Summit

Wednesday & Thursday, December 7 & 8

Noon – 7:00 pm Mountain Time

Denver, CO

<https://bit.ly/22Com-Print-Summit>

PIASCNative.news

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